

“DON’T LET YOUR TURKEY TURN ON YOU!”

Did you know there are three safe ways to thaw your Thanksgiving turkey?

In the refrigerator, in the microwave, and under cold water. Plan ahead to thaw your turkey in the refrigerator and allow 24 hours per 5 pounds of turkey. For example, if you are cooking a 15-pound turkey, you need 2-3 days to thaw turkey in the refrigerator.

To thaw a turkey in cold water takes about 30 minutes per pound. Keep the turkey in its plastic wrapping and immerse in cold tap water. You need to change the water every 30 minutes. Be sure to plan enough time to thaw your turkey. For example, if you’re cooking a 15-pound turkey, you need 6-8 hours to thaw the turkey.

THAWING A TURKEY IN THE REFRIGERATOR:

8-12 pounds	1-2 days
12-16 pounds	2-3 days
16-20 pounds	3-4 days
20-24 pounds	4-5 days

THAWING A TURKEY IN COLD WATER:

8-12 pounds	4-6 hours
12-16 pounds	6-8 hours
16-20 pounds	8-10 hours
20-24 pounds	10-12 hours

Did you know that the safest way to cook stuffing for your Thanksgiving turkey is in a casserole in a 325 degree Fahrenheit or 163 degree Celsius oven? The internal temperature of the stuffing must reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit or 74 degrees Celsius. To prepare your stuffing safely, keep wet and dry ingredients separated and chill. Then mix wet and dry ingredients just before putting stuffing into a casserole or filling the turkey cavity. The stuffing should be moist, not dry, since heat destroys bacteria more rapidly in a moist environment. If you choose to stuff your turkey, make sure it is stuffed loosely—about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of stuffing per pound of turkey. Cook the turkey immediately after stuffing and use a food thermometer to check the temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and in the center of the stuffing. Even if the innermost part of the thigh has reached a safe internal temperature of 180 degrees Fahrenheit or 82 degrees Celsius, the center of the stuffing inside the turkey needs to reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit or 74 degrees Celsius to prevent food borne illness!

Points to remember:

- *A stuffed turkey will take longer to cook than an unstuffed turkey.
- *A turkey will cook faster in a dark roasting pan.
- *An oven-cooking bag will shorten cooking time.

Did you know that it could take up to 5 hours to completely cook your Thanksgiving turkey? Here’s how to safely cook your turkey this Thanksgiving. Use a meat thermometer

inserted into the innermost part of the thigh to tell when the turkey is done. The turkey should reach 180 degrees Fahrenheit or 82 degrees Celsius and the stuffing should reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit or 74 degrees Celsius. If the stuffing is roasting in a casserole dish, be sure to check it for a final temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit or 74 degrees Celsius. After cooking your Thanksgiving dinner, be sure to keep turkey, stuffing and other hot items hot—that is above 140 degrees Fahrenheit or 40 degrees Celsius—before serving. To find out more about cooking your turkey, check out the USDA website at www.usda.gov.

APPROXIMATE COOKING TIME—UNSTUFFED

4-6 pound turkey breast	1 ½-2-¼ hours
6-8 pound turkey breast	2 ¼-3-¼ hours
8-12 pound turkey	2 ¾-3 hours
12-14 pound turkey	3-3 ¾ hours
14-18 pound turkey	3 ¾-4-¼ hours
18-20 pound turkey	4 ¼-4-½ hours
20-24 pound turkey	4 ½-5 hours

APPROXIMATE COOKING TIME—STUFFED

8-12 pound turkey	3-3 ½ hours
12-14 pound turkey	3 ½-4 hours
14-18 pound turkey	4-4 ¼ hours
18-20 pound turkey	4 ¼-4-¾ hours
20-24 pound turkey	4 ¾-5-¼ hours

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!